

The taking of the
Royall Galley of *Naunts* in
Brittaine, from the *Spanyards* and
Leaguers, with the releasement of 153.
Galley slaues, that were in her: by
John Bilbrough, Prentice of Lon-
don, in November last.



Imprinted at London for Richard Oliffe,
and are to bee sould at his shop, in *Paules*
Churchyard at the signe of the Crane.

1591.

The Making of the

Constitution of the United States

by James O. Easton

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The taking of the
 Royall Galley of *Naunts* in
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Iohn Bilbrough, Prentice of Lon-
don. 1590.



Bout a seauen yeares since,
 I *Iohn Bilbrough* the son of
Richard Bilbrough, Citizen
 and Marchant Taylor of
London, toke my aduenture
 to the seas, where in short
 space afterwards I was be-
 trayed into the enemies
 hands by the treacherie of a renegat English, not
 worthy the name of my Countreyman; which
 villanie of his extended not to mee alone, but to
 seauē other of my companions; amongst whom,
 my selfe and a Skot, remaining aliue, were carri-
 ed captiues to the towne of *New-hauen* in *Nor-*
mandie.

mandie: where being condemned into the Galleyes in the moneth of September, 1584. and there hauing remained the space of sixe yeares, enduring exceeding miserie, as hunger, colde, stripes, with many violent torments; bereft of all hope for euer to behold my parents, friends, or natie countrey againe; by reason that hauing foure times in my captiuitie attempted the breaking of my chaines, I was foure times crost with contrarie fortune, my purpose discouered, and being taken, my sorrowfull wretchednes aggravated.

Thus increasing cares with dayes, euery daye being sharper than the sharpest sting of death; it chanced that Duke *Mercurie* the gouernour of *Naunts* in *Britaine* caused the Galley Royall of that Citie to be rigged and victualled to the seas, with commission to take all those that held with the League, as well English, Scots, Flemmings as their owne nation on the Kings part. Thus floating on the seas, and rowing on the seas, now hether, now thether, expecting some prize worthy the attempting, it chaunced that the first daye of October 1590. being at anker in the Isle of *Vse* attending some ships passing either from *Rochel*, *Burwage*, or *Burdeaux*, we discouered early in the morning a great hulke of *Flanders*, which tooke her course for the Bay of *Bornefe*, on the coast of *Poytours*, not far from the riuer of *Naunts*, wher-vpon rowing to the windward of the said hulke,

wee did beare after her : against whome our Gunner made diuers shootes, but could neuer hit her.

Then I ashamed at the vntowardnes of the saide Gunner, saide openlie, hee was vnworthie of his office, and that I durst lay my life to hit her the first shot, which the Captaine hearing, demaunded if I would vndertake to shoote at her, I answered him, that albeit I was a stranger, and had long continued in miserable captiuitie, yet if hee would accept of my seruice, I would performe the best that in mee lay. The Captaine vpon my answer, commanded my chaines to bee taken off, promising if I did hit her, to giue mee my libertie.

Being in hope of freedome from this wretched seruitude, I tooke the Gonners charge in hand, and did my endeuour so well (through Gods assistance) that of eleuen shots, which I did make at her, I hit her with nine, but the hulke by the greatnes of the winde, escaped from out our danger.

The next day the Captaine called mee vnto him, saying, if I would willinglie serue as a Gunner, for the space of one whole yeare in the Galley, I shoulde, vpon his credit, haue libertie : which (seeing no remedie) I condiscended vnto.

Being thus at libertie, I was by the Captaine
vrged

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vrgerd often to goe to Masse, of whome I requested pradon; protesting that if I might bee perswaded by sufficient reason, and proote from the Word of GOD, that the Romish religion were the true doctrine of Christ, I would gladlie embrace it: in the meane time (seeing I was yet vtterlie of another opinion) I besought him to haue patience, for that a settled Religion, could not so slightlie bee remoued; which hee in hope of my conuersion (as hee termed it) in the ende granted.

Within three dayes after, wee met three English ships to the sea-boord of *Bel-yle*, hauing in our companie a Man of Warre, so wee bare both of vs after these three ships, where I was commanded to make a shot, but perceiuing, that I went vnwillinglie to worke, they came about mee with their swords drawne, threatening if I would not shoote, they would kill me presentlie; so I shot at them, but neuer hit them, and the English ships discharged so couragiously at vs, that they compelled vs to recoyle.

After that time, abhorring to bee made the butcher of my natieue countrey men, I attempted all possible meanes of escape, either to the Kings side, or into *England*, but fearing to bee taken, I discovered my intent to a Captaine, being before his thraldome a Captaine, called *Le pine*, desiring him to lend mee his boy for my conduct

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conduct to the Castle of *Blyn*, seauen leagues distant from *Naunts*: but *Le Pyne* answered, that his father would shortlie bring his ransom, and then promised to comey mee with him: otherwise (saith hee) if you should escape by the conduction of my boy, my miserie should be encreased, and my ransom doubled; with whose perswasions, for that time satisfied, I waited fitter opportunitie.

Within foure dayes after, there arriued at the Riuer of *Naunts* two & thirtie ships, and foure Gallyasses, which brought three thousand and five hundred Spanyards vnto the Duke of *Mercurie*; amongst whome manie (being sick) were sent vp to *Naunts* to be relieved, we also thinking to haue wintered there with the Galley: but there came presentlie commandement shee should be rigged, to carrie munition and money to the armie. So departing from *Naunts*, we came to the harbor of *Morbien*; thinking to haue founde the armie, but wee vnderstood the whole fleet was returned to Spaine; foure Fly-boates, and two Gallyasses onelie excepted, which were gone to *Blewet*, to take the towne of *Hendon*.

Our Captaine hearing these newes, went ashore the next morning, taking all the munition, and two hundred Spanish souldiers

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with

with him, whom he conducted to the towne
of *Vannes*. When they were departed, the
Lieutenant being left to keepe the Galley,
with no more than seauen and twentie, or
thirtie souldiers, I came vnto the captiued
Captaine *Le Pyne*, and assured him, if he could
finde meanes to breake or widen his man-
acles, there was now great likely hooode of
his escape, with the rest of the flaued. *Le Pyne*
hearing my words, askt counsell of a souldier
in the Galley, who affected him dearly, and
for his sake willingly consented to our enter-
prise, appointing in his watch to put tallow
into the touch-holes of all the Caluyers, and
after prime them; and I in my watch should
widen *Le Pynes* manacles, which accordingly
I did, purposing that wednesday morning,
being the seauenth of November last, to
put our pretence in execution; but the wind
being contrarie, wee referred it, till the next
night: which sorted (through Gods suffe-
rance) to an happy end. but now and then
Upon thursday morning, at three of the
clock, I arose and called my other compani-
on, being the *Prouansal*, with whome hauing
counsell of the matter, I came to a Marti-
ner, which was in the watch, saying, I could
not sleepe, being shaken with an ague, there-
fore, if he pleased, I would watch for him till
day,

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day, to which he gladly consented, the Pro-
uanfall did the like by the souldier which
watched in the poope, so staying till wee
thought euery man was a sleepe, I came vnto
Le Pyne bidding him dispatch, and percei-
uing there was but one rapier for vs, I fained
my selfe to be verie sick, and came to a cham-
ber in the middest of the Galley, and deman-
ded a little *Aqua Vita*, from whence I secret-
ly conueyed the Carpenters axe, and hid it in
the poope, and comming to Le Pyne said, now
dispatch come away or neuer, hee followed
presently, and I going before, blew out all the
Lampes in the Galley, that none might per-
ceiue him pace: so comming to a Scottishman,
who was appoynted to aduertize the other
flanes his companions, they should suffer no
souldiers that were in the prow, to passe in-
to the poope. But as we passed into the poope,
Le piue not being perfect in the way, stumbled
at an Italian called *Nicolas*, who sodainely
waking, demaunded who was there? It is
your friend said I. And being further que-
stioned, whether I did watch, I answered
yea, and that I came to see, if it were faire
weather. So comming into the poope, Le
Pyne tooke the rapier, and I the axe, the Pro-
uanfall hauing nothing, and so I slept vnto
the Lieutenant and killed him: *Nicolas* the I-

italian awaking, and seeing how I strooke at
his fellowes, caught me in his armes; saying,
English traytor yeeld, or thou shalt dye, I cal-
led *Le Pyne* to help; who thrust at him: which
he seeing, left me, thinking to haue caught *Le
Pyne*, but I followed him so hard, that at two
blowes wee feld him ouer bord. Then wee
set vpon the rest, and slew thirteene of them:
some lepr into the water, and foure or five
getting into a boate, called aboard a ship
which was at an ancker before vs, saying,
shoote, shoote, the slaues rebell against vs.

But I perceiuing their purpose, and fearing
that the ship would haue shot at vs, I got the
yrons wherewith they binde and vnbinde
the poore slaues, and gaue them to the Skot;
saying, vnloose thy selfe, and light mee two
Lynst-stocks and bring them forward; so ma-
king the slaues haile forward the great can-
non, and priting the rest of the peeces, I hal-
lid to the ship, and swore, if they in any wise
attempted to hinder our libertie, I would pre-
sentlie sinke her, and with that shewed them
my lynst-stockes light.

They of the ship hearing this, and the ter-
rible noyse that the slaues made in breaking
off their chaines, answered they woulde not
hinder vs: so I cutting one of our cables,
and weying another ancher, made the slaues

rowe out of the haven, and being at sea vnloosed them all: and that night by the help of God came to Bel-Ile, where hauing but 24. loaues of bread, and small store of other vittayles, being 153. slaues besides the Prouansall, Le Pyne, and my selfe, wee passed the time as well as wee could. The next morning wee set sayle, and on Sunday the xi. of Nouember brought her into the towne of Rochel: where shee dooth remaine for the Kings vse.

Captaine Le Pyne, being at Rochel, was perswaded to goe to the King for a recompence, and in going was taken by the Leaguers of Poyters, and my selfe being sore hurt, returned to Rochel, and afterwards came into England, hauing the Maior and gouernors hands to their great Seale.

Thus did I, by the help of God, escape the Spanish slauerie, the very Frenchmen themselves bearing no rule where the Spaniard is in presence: they vse them as Dogges, the Captaines of the galley haue beene Italians, and other officers Spaniards, the most of their galley-slaues haue beene Frenchmen, Flemmings, Scots, and English. Thus wishing vnto my councit-men, to be warned by other mens harmes, I end.

FINIS.



Witnesses of the truth of this
matter.

John Wilkes of London.

John Harley.

William Ward.

Richard Budge.

Richard Taylor.

Laurence Adams.

George Oliver.

And under the great seal of Rochell.



